

Statement of Representative Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S. (AZ-04)
House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources Ranking Republican
House Committee on Natural Resources Members' Day Hearing
6.4.19

Thank you Chairman Grijalva and Republican Leader Bishop. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today.

Let's start by talking about things this Committee should be focused on.

People say Congress can't get things done in this fractured environment. However, earlier this year we passed a historic lands bill and I had five bipartisan, natural resources bills important to my communities signed into law.

I thank the Chairman and Republican Leader for their work in that regard. We should be focused on working together to enact more commonsense, bipartisan priorities.

We need to modernize the Endangered Species Act. Last Congress, the Western Caucus introduced a bipartisan package of low-hanging ESA updates. Five of these bills passed this Committee. With a dismal 3% success rate, clearly this outdated law is in need of modernization.

Anyone paying attention to the news has seen the threats made by China to cut off our rare earth mineral supply. This is concerning as China controls nearly 80% of the world's rare earths.

While we need to open new rare earth processing facilities in the U.S., we also need to improve the process for domestic mining. The average permitting timeline for a mining operation in the U.S. is 7-10 years. Other countries are getting through the same process in 2-3 years.

Rep. Amodei has introduced the National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act, legislation that will create hundreds of thousands of jobs and reduce U.S. dependence on foreign minerals from countries like China.

Maintaining healthy forests is another priority we should be focused on. Mismanagement by federal agencies has left our forests vulnerable to catastrophic wildfires, resulted in the loss of life and has caused significant harm to our communities.

What we need is Rep. Westerman's Resilient Federal Forests Act. This legislation helps prevent catastrophic wildfires, promotes the quick resolution of litigation and encourages quick reforestation.

I am also concerned that the current Interior and Environment Appropriations bill contains more than 40 different appropriations that are unauthorized. Mr. Chairman, I ask permission to submit this list for the record? *(Hold up list and wait for Chairman to say without objection.)*

As the primary authorizing body for this bill, we should take our authorizing responsibility seriously and do our part to help Congress get back to regular order. Let's authorize the things we want to fund and then ensure any unauthorized programs don't receive funding.

Rather than focusing on the aforementioned priorities, the Majority has spent a lot of time on things outside our jurisdiction that aren't priorities of the American people.

These include nearly a dozen climate change hearings embracing Green New Deal-like policies. Climate change is not under this Committee's jurisdiction.

The Majority passed a misguided bill to repeal the Section 1002 oil and gas program in Alaska. In a great op-ed, the local tribe talks about how they fought for decades to open responsible production in ANWR and what this means to local communities.

The Majority's bill to fundamentally transform the General Mining Law of 1872 is unnecessary and would cause significant harm.

Without a doubt, this legislation will drive mining investment away from the U.S., furthering our dependence on foreign imports and threatening the U.S. supply chain for countless industries and products.

The Western Caucus and Members of this Committee spearheaded the effort to overturn a 420,000-acre land grab in Northern Minnesota. 17,000 jobs, \$3 billion

for education, \$1.5 billion in annual wages, \$2.5 billion annually for our economy and a total of four billion tons of strategic-and-critical-mineral-containing ore were at risk if these political anti-mining actions by the Obama Administration were not overturned.

Despite all the great work we have done on this issue, folks on the other side of the aisle continue to attempt to undermine these important projects at Committee hearings and through other means.

This week, the Committee is also holding a hearing on another anti-mining bill under the guise of protecting the Grand Canyon, even though responsible mining won't harm the Grand Canyon and removing uranium from the ground and reclaiming this area is better for the environment and Colorado River.

The breccia pipes in the withdrawal area are the highest grade ore in the continental U.S. and this vast reserve contains enough high grade uranium to provide electrical power to the state of California's 40 million people for 22.5 years.

This 1.01 million acre land grab must be defeated as uranium is on the critical minerals list and we are currently importing 97% of the uranium ore used in U.S. domestic nuclear reactors from countries like Russia.

Despite a host of reputable studies coupled with empirical evidence that firmly conclude that hydraulic fracturing is not a threat to drinking water resources, House Natural Resources Democrats recently held a hearing to the contrary and continue to attack the oil and gas industry without justification.

Clearly the priorities of the Majority are much different than when we were in charge. I'd encourage everyone in this room to but the partisanship aside and instead focus on the bipartisan priorities of the American people.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and with that I yield back.